

An early look at Part D: Plans and benefit designs

ISSUE: On January 1, 2006, Medicare will begin outpatient prescription drug coverage through its new Part D program. Part D will use private stand-alone prescription drug plans (PDPs) and Medicare Advantage prescription drug plans (MA-PDs) to deliver a standard benefit or actuarially equivalent basic coverage and, in some plans, enhanced (supplemental) benefits. Medicare beneficiaries may enroll in Part D plans during an open season between November 15, 2005 and May 15, 2006.

KEY POINTS: Although final enrollment and claims information will not be available in time to prepare MedPAC's June Report to the Congress, staff have prepared a work plan to analyze detailed information about benefit offerings of Part D plans for 2006.

ACTION: Commissioners should provide comments on the scope and substance of this work plan for the June 2006 report.

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